



FORMAT FOR
PRINTING
sponsored by



July 12, 2005

Guest Worker Program Is Bad for Taxpayers

July 12, 2005; Page A17

Tamar Jacoby's June 20 Rule of Law column "Getting Beyond the 'A-Word'¹" tried to justify amnesty for illegal immigrants by combining it with enforcement of immigration laws. She rightly says that "No one wants to reward lawbreaking" and that "history shows that amnesty is no solution," but then endorses giving illegal immigrants "legal status," in other words, amnesty.

Ms. Jacoby uses increased enforcement as an excuse for a guest worker/amnesty program. The U.S. tried this in 1986 with the result that the federal government ignored enforcement and gave amnesty to three million people. There is no reason to expect a different result now. Stronger enforcement must come before any guest worker program; the American people will not be tricked again.

And any kind of guest worker program raises serious questions:

Nearly every study shows that competition from cheap foreign labor displaces American workers, including legal immigrants, or depresses their wages. Rather than legalize illegal aliens, why not increase wages and make these jobs more attractive to American workers?

Why wouldn't a guest worker program be an open invitation to potential terrorists? They could enter the country legally, get a job, and use the program as cover. One of the terrorists who blew up the garage of the World Trade Center in 1993 did just that under an earlier program.

Guest workers do not earn enough to pay income taxes. And, if they pay Social Security taxes, at their wages they will get back \$100,000 more than they paid in. They also use many government services like education and health care. So why isn't a guest worker program bad for American taxpayers?

Finally, a guest worker program will not solve the illegal immigration problem. Illegal immigrants will continue to come across our borders to obtain government benefits, seek other jobs, and gain automatic citizenship for their children born in the United States.

Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Texas)

Washington

(Rep. Smith is the former chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims.)

URL for this article:

DOW JONES REPRINTS

◀R This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit: www.djreprints.com.

- See a sample reprint in PDF format.
- Order a reprint of this article now.